FILE · MICD

THE MAYORS' INSTITUTE ON CITY DESIGN

Design Program, National Endowment for the Arts Summer 1994

Design and Urbanism in the American South

Director's Note: Recently, we've learned of several success stories from alumni mayors in the South, and decided to devote this issue to their work. As reported below, Mayors from across the South have become strong advocates for the revitalization of neglected places and the creation of new spaces to support community life.

—C.S.

Several cities in the American South are famous for the high quality of their public places. For years, urban designers have studied the rich fabric of Charleston's streets, the enduring character of Ogelthorpe's plan for Savannah, and the formal elegance of Richmond's Monument Avenue.

The spirit of these important precedents is interpreted in the recent work of many Southern cities. An interest in the quality of the public environment has caught hold—these cities are finding new ways to create meaningful, memorable places and spark private investment and public activity. Innovative projects in the cities of Chattanooga, Tennessee; Macon, Georgia; and Covington, Kentucky—the subject of this article—provide ample evidence of the renewed state of urbanism in the American South.

Macon, Georgia

Under the leadership of **Mayor Tommy Olmsted** (MICD XIV 1993), Macon has made great progress in reenergizing the city's economy and improving the quality of its public spaces. Though Macon's downtown suffered in the economic hard times of the 1960s and 1970s, a partnership between the private, nonprofit, and public sectors has brought life back to the city. Since 1980, over $130 million in private funds have been invested downtown.

Downtown's turn around is due in large measure to a highly successful facade/rehabilitation program sponsored by the city and the Urban Development Authority. Over 90 buildings have been renovated under the program—an impressive number of restored Victorian and pre-Civil War storefronts line the city's streets.

Reviving public space is also high on the city's agenda. Through improvments to city streets and sidewalks and the institution of horseback and bicycle police patrols, street life downtown has improved significantly. Broad, well-lighted sidewalks, mature street trees, and mixed use buildings (shops and offices with second story apartments) make for an ideal pedestrian environment.

The city is also recreating Civic Square, a public green between historic City Hall the Greek Revival-style Macon Coliseum. Two blocks of nondescript modern structures were cleared to reveal the axial relationship between the buildings, and local architects Russell Claxton and Shannon Fickling have designed a pedestrian-friendly, civic space. When complete, the Square will include a formal green, realigned streets and sidewalks, paved crosswalks, and new street lights and street trees. ISTEA enhancement, city, and Small Business Administration funds will support the work.

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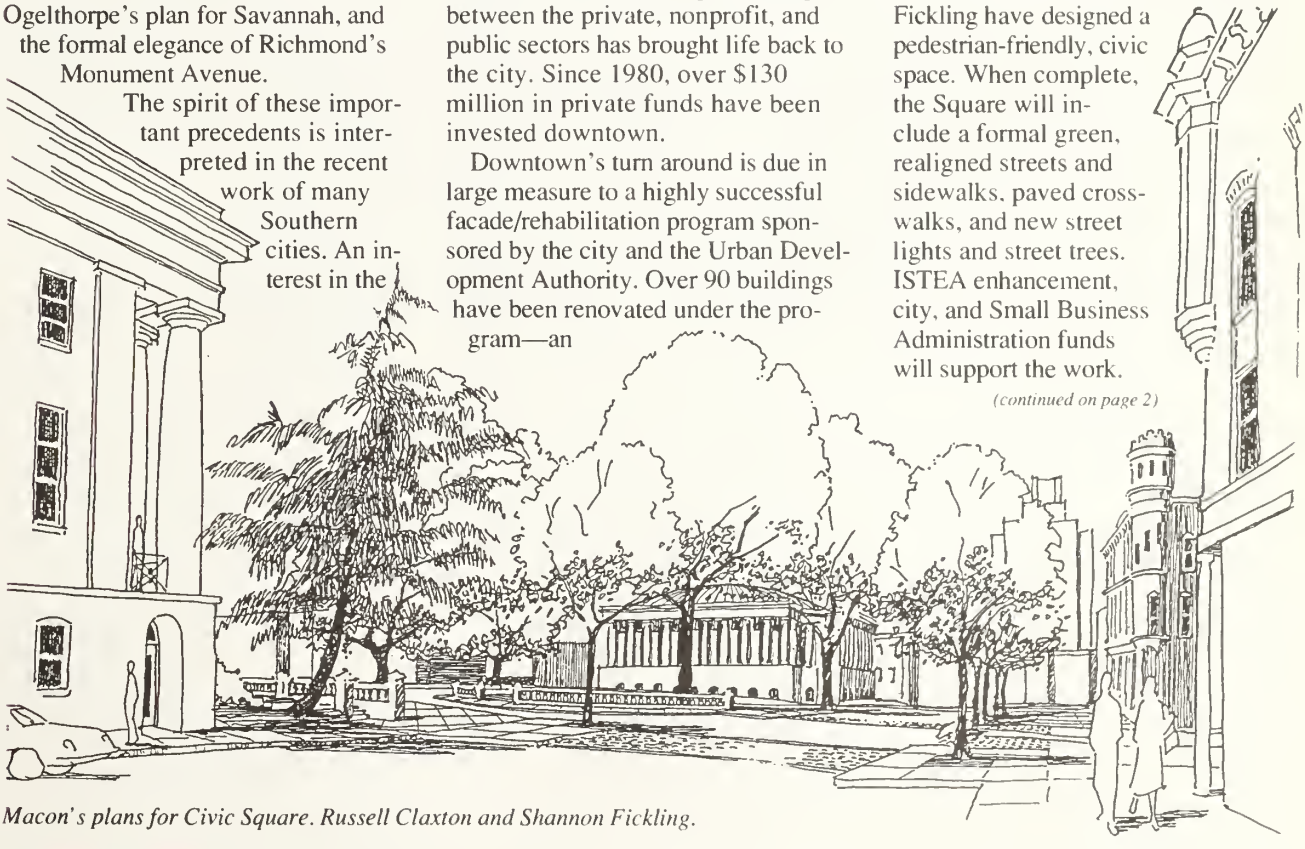


Macon's plans for Civic Square. Russell Claxton and Shannon Fickling.

(continued from page 1)

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Under the energetic leadership of **Mayor Gene Roberts** (MICD III 1987), Chattanooga has brushed aside its reputation as a sleepy Southern town and become recognized nationally for its innovative design, transportation, and urban development initiatives. In the past few years a host of new projects have been completed and downtown has regained its place as the community's center. According to recent estimates, nearly $800 million of public and private investment has been attracted to the area since the mid-1980s.

Vision 2000 is credited as the catalyst for the city's renewal. In response to a decline in manufacturing in the 1970s, local leaders organized a collaborative planning and goal-setting process in which over 1,700 citizens came together to consider the community's challenges and opportunities, and build agreement on a general vision for the future. A remarkable number of ideas were generated and a diverse group of projects were initiated—the development of the Family Violence Shelter for battered women and the renovation of the historic Tivoli Theatre are two notable examples of the process' success.

Vision 2000 also sparked interest in the city's riverfront. Long neglected, the riverfront has been transformed from a derelict area to a magnet for tourists and residents. Through the cooperative efforts of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, several large projects have been completed, including the Tennessee Aquarium and Ross Landing Park and Plaza.

The $45 million privately financed Aquarium, the only one of its kind in the country dedicated to freshwater habitats and ecology, is the centerpiece of Ross Landing Park and Plaza, a public space planned to interperet the city's history. Designed by EDAW, SITE, local artist Stan Townsend, and Robert Seals Architects, the $10 million public park tells the story of the city's past, from prehistoric times to the present—significant events from local history are represented in alternating bands of landscaping, paving, and waterscape. An award-winning visitors' center, the first phase of a planned 22 mile river walk, and a new, fully-leased, market-rate apartment house add to the life of the riverfront.

Chattanooga's Ross Landing.

Model of Chattanooga's Miller Park Plaza. Koetter, Kim & Associates, Inc.

A short distance up Market Street is another significant addition to the city's public realm: Miller Park Plaza. The plaza accommodates a variety of activities—public meetings, receptions and recitals, exhibits, and fairs. Koetter, Kim & Associates, Inc., the project architects, designed the plaza and office building as an extension of Miller Park, an existing public park to the east. To ensure future development is properly scaled and detailed, Koetter, Kim also developed design guidelines for the blocks around the plaza.

Covington, Kentucky

Covington has come along way since **Mayor Denny Bowman**'s (MICD X 1991) participation in the

(continued on page 5)

Presidential Design Awards Call for Entrys

To recognize excellence in design accomplishments and to honor those individuals who have made outstanding contributions to federal design, the White House is pleased to invite entries for the Fourth Round of the Presidential Design Awards.

Works that have been sponsored, authorized, commissioned, produced, or supported by the government of the United States of America are eligible. Works must have been completed and in use between June 1, 1984 and June 1, 1994. Current employees, former federal employees, and federal contractors, state, and local governments, and nonprofit organizations that have completed design works for the federal government may enter.

> ***Design, at its best, can enrich our lives, beautify our surroundings, improve our productivity and performance, even help to effect social change.***
>
> —President Clinton

The Presidential Design Awards are administered by the Design Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. *For an entry form or information about the Presidential Design Awards, call Thomas Grooms at the National Endowment for the Arts, (202) 682-5437.* ★

U.S. Conference of Mayors January 1994

Washington

Place, Community, and Economic Development, A Presentation by Donovan Rypkema.
Drawing from the work of a wide range of experts, Rypkema explained in economic terms why maintaining and reinforcing a city's 'sense of place' and 'spirit of community' are crucial for successful economic development. He argued that, "tomorrow's cities...will be innovation and place dependent cities...not location dependent." Proximity to natural resources and transportation routes will become less important to a city's economic health and well-being. "Cities will either innovate and build on the strength of their place [and people] or decline."

"Quality of life," Rypkema explained, "is the amalgam of those things that make a *pla*ce out of a location and a co*mmunity* out of a bunch of houses. That's why the debate cannot be framed as economic development *or* quality urban design." "For lots of reasons," he continued, "economic growth will *only* take place on a sustainable basis where there is a high quality of life; and securing quality of life is at the heart of what preservation and community design is all about....It is our built environment that expresses, perhaps better than anything else, our diversity, our identity, our individuality"
For a copy of Mr. Rypkema's presentation, contact the Mayors' Institute at (202) 393-4112.

U.S. Conference of Mayors June 1994

Portland

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in Residential Neighborhoods, A Presentation by Michael Pyatok, AIA.
Organized around the theme "crime prevention through environmental design", Pyatok outlined strategies to promote the development of safe, vital, mixed use neighborhoods. To thrive, Pyatok explained, neighborhoods must contain jobs, schools, easily available services and retail, and access to mass transit. "Well-designed housing, if built in a neighborhood without supportive services, will deteriorate rapidly, regardless of physical planning strategies," he advised. "Physical planning devices are useless if there are not other things in place."

Pyatok also stressed the importance of engaging citizens in community design processes. If we can get the local community involved, he argued, citizens will be more likely to develop a sense of ownership in their neighborhood and become advocates for its improvement. "Ultimately," Pyatok concluded, "our purpose is to create conditions that will make tenancy in America more secure."
For a copy of Mr. Pyatok's presentation, contact the Mayors' Institute at (202) 393-4112.

MICD: XVI April 1994

University of Virginia

Charlottesville

RESOURCE TEAM

Dena Belzer
development economics

Alan Brangman
architecture/development

Catherine Brown
landscape arch/urban design

John Bullard
sustainable development

Maurice Cox
architecture/urban design

Robert Harris
architecture/urban design

Ernest Hutton, Jr.
architecture/city planning

Mayor Joseph Riley, Jr.
Charleston, SC (keynote)

Donovan Rypkema
preservation/development

Christine Saum
architecture/urban design

Frank Spielberg
transportation engineering

MAYORS AND DESIGN ISSUES

Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton, Minneapolis, MN: A new public safety facility is planned for a site near the city's civic core. What steps can the city take to ensure the project is well-integrated into the city fabric and compliments the scale and character of existing development and the historic city hall?

Mayor Herbert Drinkwater, Scottsdale, AZ: An ambitious plan to redevelop an area along the Arizona Canal has been initiated. One portion, between downtown and a stable neighborhood, is slated for new residential development oriented towards the canal. Can the housing be designed to relate well to the canal and compliment the neighborhood?

Mayor John DeStefano, Jr., New Haven CT: Fair Haven is a compact, mixed use district close to downtown surrounded by underutilized industrial waterfront properties. How can the city promote private residential and commercial investment and reconnect residents to the river?

Mayor Jack Geraghty, Spokane, WA: Recent studies indicate that the existing convention center is too small to attract regional and national conferences, and the city has begun to explore its options. What is a proper location for the new center and how can it be designed to benefit neighboring properties?

Mayor Nancy Graham, West Palm Beach, FL: Florida DOT is planning improvements to Broadway Avenue (US 1) north of downtown. How will the proposal affect the adjacent neighborhoods, and what building types or uses might be appropriate along the improved roadway?

MICD: Northeast May 1994

University of Maryland and Morgan State University

Baltimore

RESOURCE TEAM

Matthew Bell
architecture/urban design

Ralph Bennett
architecture/urban design

Shirl Byron
urban planning

Rick Chellman
civil engineering

Susan Child
landscape architecture

William Collins
planning/former mayor

Dennis Frenchman
architecture/urban design

Tony Hiss
writer

Steven Hurtt
architecture/urban design

Siddhartha Sen
urban planning

Patricia Wilson
preservation planning

MAYORS AND DESIGN ISSUES

Mayor James Grimes, Frederick, MD: Flood control improvements to Carrol Creek create opportunities for new development and links between downtown and nearby city parks. Does the existing master plan promote the appropriate character and scale of development?

Mayor Warren Haggerty, Jr., Reading, PA: The city is in the early stages of planning for a civic center on a site north of Penn Street. How can the center and a related hotel become a catalyst for redevelopment, and what sort of design guidelines should be in place?

Mayor Dolores Hauber, Groton, CT: Mystic has become a popular tourist destination, but traffic congestion and limited parking have begun to erode its 'small town' character. Can the city manage tourist traffic and design improvements to enhance the pedestrian environment without detracting from the town's character?

Mayor John Lipphardt, Wheeling, WV: A district to the east of the recently designated National Heritage Area is home to the city's historic market and a mix older industrial buildings and warehouses. What steps should the city take to attract appropriate uses to the area and ensure that new development is well-integrated into the existing fabric?

Mayor James Sills, Wilmington, DE: The city is interested in reconnecting downtown to the Christina River and encouraging redevelopment at the south end of Market Street. How can the city ensure that the first private project at the water's edge complies with the public's objectives?

Mayor Rosemary Tiernay, New Bedford, MA: The historic core of New Bedford is cut off from the waterfront and a proposed maritime heritage center by the JFK Memorial Highway. Can the road be redesigned to better connect downtown to the waterfront.

Mayor Rob Wagner, Nashua, NH: An opportunity exists for Nashua to transform its riverfront into a more active, accessible place. What design improvements are appropriate for the area where Main Street crosses the river?

MICD: South June 1994

Georgia Institute of Technology

Atlanta

RESOURCE TEAM

Douglas Allen
landscape architecture

Daniel Bennett
architecture/urban design

Alan Brangman
architecture/development

David Crane
architecture/urban design

Richard Dagenhart
architecture/urban design

Grover Mouton
architecture/urban design

Nancy Nolan
urban planning/development

Catherine Ross
transportation planning

David Sawicki
urban planning/economics

Mayor Wilbur Smith
Fort Myers, FL (keynote)

Stroud Watson
architecure/urban design

MAYORS AND DESIGN ISSUES

Mayor Cliff Aucoin, New Iberia, LA: Main Street buildings are occupied and in relatively good condition, but their long term economic vitality is uncertain. What actions can be taken to ensure the future stability of the city's center?

Mayor Hubert Brodell, Jonesboro, AR: Traffic entering and leaving Jonesboro's vital downtown is projected to increase dramatically in the next few years. How can access to downtown's hospital and university be improved without damaging the character of close-in neighborhoods?

Mayor Ken Combs, Gulfport, MS: Highway 49 links the city's waterfront and new gambling facilities to I-10. Can the Highway 49 strip be transformed into a memorable entrance to the city and should the city concentrate on public improvements or the control of private development?

Mayor Patsy Jo Hilliard, East Point, GA: East Point was once an important center for commercial activity on Atlanta's south side, but the city's commercial core has been bypassed by the highway? Will an 'urban village' planning model work for the city or should another approach be considered?

Mayor Rebecca Smothers, High Point, NC: The recent move of Sears to a new mall leaves a large vacant site in the heart of the city. Should the city purchase the site for public use? If not, what kind and form of development should the city encourage on the site?

Mayor William Workman, Greenville, SC: Several blocks between Greenville's downtown and the new performing arts center on the river are vacant or underutilized. How should the city begin planning for the future of this important area and what development concepts should guide their efforts?

(continued from page 2)

Mayors' Institute. Planning and design for the city's downtown, historic neighborhoods, and entrance corridors is well underway, and results are already evident —Pike Street, the city's traditional shopping corridor, has been reopened to vehicular traffic and just a few weeks ago, the city announced the winners of a competition to redesign the Roebling Bridge entrance to the city.

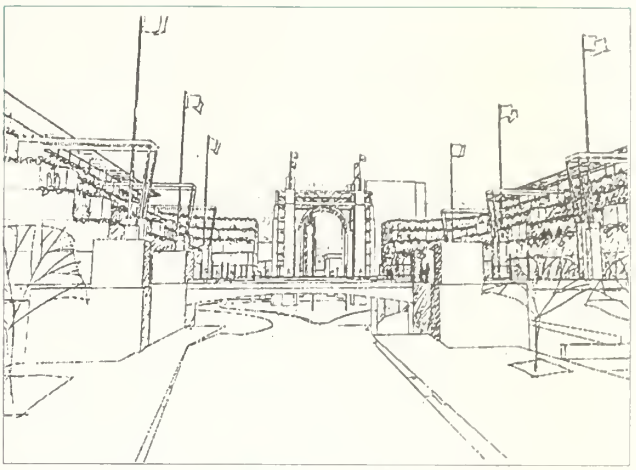
In an earlier effort to bolster downtown retailing, the first block of Pike Street—Covington's traditional shopping street—was closed to traffic in the mid-1970s. A fountain, special pavers, and decorative lighting were installed to help attract customers, but the new traffic pattern made it difficult to get around, and downtown's decline continued. By late 1992, high vacancy rates sparked concern among city leaders and merchants, and a plan was devised to return traffic and parking to the street.

Tom West, director of the Covington Business Council called Pike Street's reopening a "key element in a new downtown traffic system that will make our central business district more accessible to cars and pedestrians." The enthusiasm is shared by the Mayor Bowman, who describes the project as "the first piece of the puzzle" to promote downtown's revival. "Hopefully," the mayor announced last year, "increased traffic, together with the city's loan program [for rehabilitation], will result in new businesses." Although it is too soon to measure the project's success, building renovations and an upward trend in occupancy rates are positive signs that the plan is having the anticipated effect.

Another process, recently initiated, also aims to improve public space downtown. Through a partnership between the Roebling Gateway Park Corporation and the city, an international competition was held to solicit urban design plans for a major entrance into the city.

The competition brief challenged entrants to "design an innovative and exciting entrance, a 'gateway' experience to the city," and "create a beautiful place," on the Covington side of the Roebling Bridge. The historic bridge, perhaps the region's most important structure, was designed by John Roebling who achieved world fame as the designer of the Brooklyn Bridge. The competition site is part of a development district in which over 200 million public and private dollars have been invested.

The winning design, one of more than 100 entries, was selected in May by a panel of nationally-known architects and planners. The first place design, by Cincinnati architect James Cheng, calls for a large public lawn defined on three sides by mid-rise buildings with grand archways for vehicular traffic and observation platforms allowing panoramic views of the city and river. Cheng received a $10,000 prize and will have the opportunity to negotiate the plan's implementation.



The winning design for Covington's Roebling Gateway Park.

This is only a sampling of current urban design in the South. Many Southern alumni of the Mayors' Institute are working to improve the quality of design in their cities.

Mayor Wilbur Smith, III of Fort Myers, Florida, assisted by Grover Mouton, former director of the Mayors' Institute: South, examines development plans in the city to ensure that the public realm is continually improved; urban design forums and workshops have been sponsored by the mayors of Augusta and Savannah, Georgia and Monroe, Louisiana; and the mayors of Abilene and Fort Worth, Texas have brought urban design into their city's development discussions.

Clearly, Southern city leaders have taken to heart Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley's observation that we underserve our citizens "when we are not willing to believe how passionately they need beautiful and livable cities." As Mayor Riley advised at the opening of the spring meeting of the Institute in Charlottesville, "Cities should be places where the heart can sing."★

CITY DESIGN

The Mayors' Institute on City Design newsletter.

The Mayors' Institute on City Design, sponsored by the Design Program of the National Endowment for the Arts and several schools of architecture across the country, is dedicated to improving the design of American cities.

To learn more about the work of the Institute or to find out about an upcoming event, please contact Christine Saum, Executive Director, or Steven Schukraft, Program Coordinator, at The Mayors' Institute on City Design, 401 F Street NW, Room 321, Washington, DC 20001 or call (202) 393-4112.

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PHOTO CREDITS

Page 1 - Civic Square, *Claxton Architects.*

Page 2 - Miller Park Plaza, *Koetter, Kim & Assoc. Inc. /* Ross Landing, *Mayors' Institute on City Design.*

Page 5 - Roebling Gateway Park, *Roebling Gateway Park Corporation.*

C A L E N D A R

October 6 - 8, 1994
MICD XVII: San Antonio, TX

October 8 - 11, 1994
American Society of Landscape Architects, San Antonio, TX

October 26 - 30, 1994
National Trust for Historic Preservation, Boston, MA

October 27-29, 1994
MICD Midwest: Washington University, St. Louis, MO

November 10 - 12, 1994
MICD West: University of California, Berkeley, CA

November 30 - December 4, 1994
National League of Cities, Minneapolis, MN

ALUMNI NOTES

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. (MICD I 1986), cofounder of the Mayors' Institute, was awarded the American Institute of Architects' Thomas Jefferson Award for Public Architecture.

The award recognizes the mayor's work in making **Charleston, SC** a "national urban model of a community where preservation and progress not only coexist, but effortlessly merge into a thoroughly unique and highly admired city." **Mayor Daniel Kemmis** (MICD VIII 1990) of **Missoula, MT** served on the awards jury.

★

Two Institute alumni have joined President Clinton's administration in Washington, DC. **John Bullard** (MICD II 1987), former mayor of **New Bedford, MA**, has been appointed Director of the Commerce Department's Office of Sustainable Development and **George Latimer** (MICD I 1986), former mayor of **St. Paul, MN**, is Director of Secretary Cisneros' Special Actions Office at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

★

In early March, **Mayor Sharpe James** (MICD VIII 1990) of **Newark NJ** invited local public officials and the press to witness the explosion of four 13 story public housing buildings. "The apartments, some of which had not been occupied since 1972, are to be replaced by townhouses scattered throughout the city" reported *Metropolis* magazine.

Chattanooga, TN's innovative urban development and transportation initiatives will be featured in an upcoming Turner Network Television program on world cities and sustainable development. Scheduled to air August 29 at 9:00 PM, the show will highlight the city's successful community visioning efforts, riverfront renaissance, and zero emissions transit program.

In June, **Mayor Gene Roberts** (MICD III 1987) hosted a reception and city tour for mayors and resource team members in attendance at the southern regional meeting of the Mayors' Institute. **Mayor Patsy Jo Hilliard** of **East Point, GA** and **Mayor Hubert Brodell** of **Jonesboro, AK** described the tour as the highlight of their experience at the Institute.

★

Former mayor **Dorothy Inman-Crews** (MICD VI 1989) of **Tallahassee, FL** served on the American Institute of Architects' jury to select the 1994 Honor Awards for Urban Design. The Charleston Navy Yard Master Plan in Boston, Bryant Park in New York, and Post Office Square Park and Garage in Boston were among the projects selected.

★

Several alumni mayors are spending this summer on the gubenatorial campaign trail. **Mayor Joseph Ganim** (MICD XIII 1992) of **Bidgeport, CT**; **Mayor Jan Laverty Jones** (MICD XI 1991) of **Las Vegas, NV**; and **Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.** (MICD I 1986) of **Charleston, SC** are each seeking their state's highest office.

★

Mayor Edward G. Randolph, Jr.'s (MICD South 1991) **Alexandria, LA** was recently named an All American City by the National Civic League.

★

A 1994 City Livability Award was presented to **Mayor Mary Ann McCollum** (MICD Midwest 1993) at the U.S. Conference for Mayors' meeting in Portland. The award recognizes **Columbia, MO** for its development of one of the nation's largest wastewater treatment wetlands.

Outstanding Achievement Awards were presented to **Mayor Gene Roberts** (MICD III 1987) of **Chattanooga, TN** for the city's riverfront renaissance and to **Mayor Sharpe James** (MICD VIII 1990) of **Newark, NJ** for the city's support for the arts. The annual program is sponsored by the USCM and Waste Management, Inc.

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